Mrs - Jno. R. Irwin

# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

1832 - 1932

COMPILED BY

MRS. J. A. FORE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# *Foreword*

The Auxiliary of the First Presbyterian Church is deeply indebted to Mrs. J. A. Fore for her labor of love in compiling the history and interesting facts about our Church and Woman's Work.

This publication is the contribution of the Auxiliary in commemoration of the Church Centennial, 1932.

The facts of the origin and growth of the Auxiliary as told in this booklet are given for the purpose of preserving so valuable a Church History that it may be passed down to future generations.

The consecrated, unselfish women who founded the Women's Societies rest from their labors, but in endless and ever increasing beneficence their works do follow them. With such a challenge, we and coming generations should not be content to give to the work anything but the best of ourselves.

Abigail Alexander Carson
President of Auxiliary
1931-1933

# *First Presbyterian Church*

Charlotte, N. C.

Part 1—Sketch of Church—Written 1923

Part 2—History Women's Auxiliary—Written 1932

Part 3—The Centennial—Written 1932

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By

Mrs. J. A. Fore

Historian of Auxiliary

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# *A Sketch of The First Presbyterian Church of Charlotte*

(Published in Charlotte Observer October 21, 1923)

At the September (1923) meeting of the Auxiliary of the First Presbyterian Church of Charlotte, a sketch of the church was read by Mrs. J. A. Fore, the occasion celebrating the 100th anniversary of the completion and dedication of the First church built on the grounds in 1823, nine years before it became a distinctly Presbyterian church.—Editor.

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In 1765 Henry McColloh, acting as agent of Augustus Selwyn, to whom the King had granted large tracts of land, donated a tract of 360 acres to the Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, for a Court House, stocks and prison. The town of Charlotte was laid off on this land in 1768. The Commissioners of the Town set apart a lot on Trade and Church Streets, in 1815, to be used for religious purposes and for a cemetary. The citizens of the town erected a comfortable building thereon, which was used by the several denominations for a number of years, the principal contributors being Presbyterians.

According to Tompkins History of Mecklenburg County, in 1821, the Charlotte members of Sugar Creek Presbyterian Church petitioned to be formed into a separate congregation and the Rev. S. C. Caldwell, pastor of Sugar Creek Church, who had been preaching in Charlotte, since 1805, sometimes under the trees and sometimes in a log house, continued to preach for the Charlotte congregation, once a month until his death in 1826. On June 8, 1827, the Rev. R. H. Morrison was installed as pastor of the congregations of Charlotte and Sugar Creek, and he served these churches until April 3, 1833, when his pastoral relation with the church of Charlotte was dissolved.

## The First Building

The church building was begun in 1818 but was not completed until August, 1823—when the dedication sermon was preached by the Rev. Doctor McRee of Iredell county. When the church was finished, there remained a debt of fifteen hundred dollars, ($1500.00), and the money was borrowed from the Bank of New Bern, which had an agency in

the town. The commissioners of Charlotte made a corporate note for the amount which was negotiated in said bank, on condition that the title to the property be retained by them. The debt was carried by the bank until 1832 when the charter of the bank expired and the payment became a necessity. Mr. John Irwin who desired the church for the Presbyterians, proposed to the authorities, that if they would convey the property to him, he would personally pay off the debt, which was considered a great burden on the town. A deed was accordingly made to him for the property, which he later turned over to the Trustees of the Church. The sum of six hundred and forty dollars ($640.00) was raised among the Presbyterians to re-imburse Mr. Irwin—he paying the remainder. This Church should always remember with gratitude the liberality and services of Mr. Irwin in securing this property for the Presbyterians. The newer members will be interested to know that Mr. Irwin was the father of that notedly good woman, Mrs. Mary Osborne, the mother of the late Judge Frank Osborne.

## Organization of the Church

The Church was organized by Rev. R. H. Morrison as a Presbyterian Church on the fourth Sunday in August, 1832, with thirty-six members and Messrs. David Parks and Nathan Carrol as ruling elders. The descendents of those thirty-six members are in strong force today in the membership of this Church, or of the other churches in this city, as will be readily recognized by the names of the Alexanders, Davidsons, Smiths, Carsons, Grahams, Wilsons, Irwins, and others. There are two members of the First Church today, whose parents were among the charter members when it was organized, viz: Miss Sarah Dougherty and Miss Mag Graham. Miss Dougherty herself joined the church in 1852, and has, therefore, been a member seventy-one years.

Miss Dougherty and Mrs. Margaret Springs Kelly both say, the pulpit in the old church was very high and had to be reached with stairs, and the pews had high backs, and doors which were closed when the family went within. It has been imposible to find out what became of the old pulpit and pews when this first church was torn down to make room for the new church which was built in 1857, but the building was bought by Mr. Tiddy, the father of Miss Sarah

Tiddy, recently deceased and he built his home of the brick and any other good material he could use. This *house is intact and is owned by Doctor Wilder who lives in it. Doctor Wilder says the stained glass window in the north side of the house, and also the beautiful stairway and several doors are from the old church. Miss Sue Boyd and Mrs. Kelly also corroborate these facts.

## Pastors of the Church

Eight godly ministers served this old Mother Church of Charlotte from 1832 up to and through the War Between the States. The Rev. Alexander Sinclair, the last of these, was pastor from 1857-1865. It was during his pastorate that the Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church which had divided itself from the Presbyterian Church of the U. S. A. in the early years of the war, met in 1864 in this church—I might say in this very building, because the church which was built in 1857 (the congregation worshipping in the Court House in the interval) was only enlarged and improved in 1894, when the last change was made, with the exception of the recent addition to the Sunday School, made possible by a gift from the late Mr. Burroughs. Dr. Joseph R. Wilson, the father of President Woodrow Wilson, was the clerk of the Assembly when it met here in 1864 according to an account of the Assembly published in an issue of the "Daily Bulletin" of Charlotte, N. C., dated May 8, 1864, which is prized as a relic in the possession of Mrs. Samuel Pelham, formerly Miss Mary Sinclair, a daughter of the Rev. Alexander Sinclair, who was pastor at that time.

Dr. A. W. Miller had the longest pastorate, serving the Church from 1865-1892. Since that date four beloved ministers have successively filled the pulpit of this Church and have passed to their reward. These were Dr. John A. Preston, Dr. J. R. Howerton, Dr. Morris Kincaid, and Dr. D. H. Rolston.

Dr. A. S. Johnson is the honored pastor of the First Presbyterian and has been since 1918.

## The General Assembly Meeting

The Southern Assembly has met in this church three times, an unusual honor for so small a city, and evidently a tribute to its loyal Presbyterianism. We all recollect the recent Assembly presided over by that distinguished son

*This house was on the site of the Wilder building.

of Piedmont North Carolina—Dr. Walter Lingle; but I wish to call attention to the Assembly that met here in 1897 when the Rev. Doctor Howerton had just come to Charlotte. That Assembly was noted for two reasons because it commemorated the 250th anniversary of the Westminister Assembly and also because Doctor Wilson was Stated Clerk of that Assembly just as in 1864. The history of that Charlotte Assembly with all the speeches and sermons delivered at the 250th celebration, has been published in book form and a copy is in the Charlotte Library. Dr. Walter Moore in a letter written to his niece in Charlotte, who made inquiry at the request of the writer, has this to say of that Assembly: "I think it was at the meeting of the General Assembly at Charlotte in 1897 when it celebrated the 250th anniversary of the Assembly of Westminister divines who formulated our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, that I saw the three eminent ministers mentioned, Dr. Robert Dabney, the greatest theologian our Church ever produced and for many years professor of Systematic Theology at our Seminary; Dr. Moses Hoge, who was for fifty years pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, in Richmond, and Dr. Joseph R. Wilson, father of President Woodrow Wilson. Doctor Wilson had been a Professor in Columbia Theological Seminary, Pastor of the First Church at Wilmington, N. C., Professor in the South Western Presbyterian University, and at the time I speak of 1897 he was Stated Clerk of the General Assembly."

## First Church in Charlotte

This Church antedated the beginning of all the one hundred or more churches in this city. It set up the beacon light of Christianity and Presbyterianism in the midst of this community, saying to all the world, As for us of the town of Charlotte, we will serve the Lord. It was the only church for many years and the only Presbyterian Church for a half century, but it grew and waxed abundantly, until the year 1873 it was thought advisable to form another church—the Second Presbyterian Church. Up to this time it had been called the Presbyterian Church, but with the advent of the new Church it changed automatically to the First Presbyterian Church. There is something in a name after all. Presbyterianism has grown until now there are twelve churches in our midst, all direct offshoots of these two Churches.

## The First Church and Patriotism

I have wished in this paper to stress particularly the force for righteousness this Church has been in the history of this section and also how it touched the patriotic and social life of the people. During the war between the States, the Church bells all over the South were called for by the Confederate government to be melted into ordinance, guns, etc. Recently the historical department of the general body of the U. D. C., asked for information as to the churches that had given bells and for any interesting history connected therewith. The writer was designated to secure the history of the Charlotte bells, and learned from Clark's Regimental history that the church bells of this city were made into guns and cannon for Brem's Battery commanded by the father of Mr. Walter Brem. There were but few churches here at the time and all, including the Presbyterian voted to give their bells. This Church was historic in so many ways that the people of the town could not bear to sacrifice the bell that had rung for church services, weddings and funerals of the community for more than a generation. At a public meeting it was decided that the Court House bell should be taken as a substitute, and the Presbyterian bell be placed in the Court House, which stood where the Selwyn Hotel is located. During the remainder of the war and for many years after, this was the only bell in the town and was rung for the services of all the churches, for the Court and for fires. These facts were related to the writer by Mr. Jack Myers, Mr. Parks Hutchison and Mrs. Margaret Kelly. Chief Orr, of the Charlotte Police told the writer that when the old Court House was torn down to make way for the Hotel, the old bell was removed and placed in the Ninth Street Graded School, which had just been completed. There it hangs today, calling the children to their school duties regularly. The Chief said his father, who had lost an arm in the war of the Sixties, was made a policeman immediately on his return, and it was his duty to ring the Court House bell for all purposes, and when it was no longer necessary, he still rang it on New Year's Eve every year, which custom, Chief Orr still continues in memory of his father and for patriotic reasons. So the old bell is Church history—Charlotte History—and Confederate history. At the request of the writer Chief Orr with two other policemen went up into the tower of the Ninth Street School a few weeks ago to examine the old bell. He says there is no writing on it

that he could discover but the clapper and hanger were hand-wrought, the clapper was flattened on its striking sides and the bell is worn thin where it strikes, showing its great age. It would seem that this old bell should be safeguarded and prized as a valuable relic by the City and the patriotic societies.

Daily Prayer meetings were held in this church during the early years of the war, according to an old paper in my possession—"The N. C. Whig," dated September 17, 1861. A part of the leading editorial that day reads thus, "Since Monday the 9th inst., a daily prayer meeting for the prosperity of the Confederacy and the success of its arms, has been held in the Presbyterian Church commencing at eight o'clock in the morning. The ministers of the different denominations attend and lead alternately."

## The Off Shoots of the First Church

Davidson College was established by the Rev. Robert H. Morrison, the first pastor of this Church after its organization as a Presbyterian Church and it has always been a liberal contributor to the College in both men and money. Doctor Morrison was also the first President of Davidson College.

The First and Second Churches were almost wholly instrumental in converting the old Charlotte Female Institute into the Presbyterian College for Women—now Queens College; and in establishing the Presbyterian Hospital and the Rescue Home—both Churches giving large donations to these causes every year.

Barium Springs, however, is the outgrowth of a little home established in Charlotte by a few consecrated women, mostly if not altogether from this Church. As nearly as I can learn these were Mesdames R. E. Cochrane, C. M. Gibbon, S. M. Howell, W. W. Ward, Lewis Reading, L. L. Sanders, Archie Graham and A. G. Brenizer, all of whom have gone to their reward, but their works do live after them. This home accomplished so much good for poor boys (and girls?) that the Presbytery took it over and finally the Synod of North Carolina. It became necessary to enlarge the building and have more spacious grounds, and the Synod decided to move the Orphanage to Barium Springs because land could be bought much cheaper there than in the City. How great trees from little acorns grow! Think of this most important work of the

North Carolina Synod having its beginning right in this Church and at first altogether the work of those beloved women.

The Sunday School was probably started before 1834 as I note from Tompkin's History that a Sunday School Union was formed in the town during that year.

## Distinguished Sons and Daughters

Some of the most distinguished men and women of the South have been members of this Church. Among these were: Gen. D. H. Hill, one of the greatest generals of the Confederacy, who was also an honored elder; Governor Vance and his first wife; General Barringer and his first wife, and Mrs. Stonewall Jackson. Mrs. Hill, Mrs. Jackson, the first Mrs. Barringer and Mrs. Brown, the wife of Col. John Brown, were daughters of Rev. Robert Morrison, the President and founder of Davidson College—all of these sisters were members of this Church. The lives of Mrs. Jackson and Mrs. Brown were bound up in the history of the Church and the memory of their beautiful Christianity, their gentle and gracious manners is like the fragrance of a lovely flower to those who knew them. Edward Kidder Graham, President of the University of North Carolina, was reared in this Church and the great truths he learned here had full fruition in the lives of the thousands of students at Chapel Hill whom he influenced in his short life. Dr. D. H. Hill, of Raleigh, former President of the A. & E. College, is also a son of the First Presbyterian Church. Our own Dr. Walter Moore, President of Union Theological Seminary, one of the greatest preachers of the Presbyterian faith, a Gamaliel in wisdom as he presides over the destinies of our Seminary in Richmond, always speaks with pride of having been reared in this old Church. Going backward, before the war of the 60's, there were Judge James Osborne, Judge Victor Barringer, Gen. James Young, who was an elder for thirty-three years, and undoubtedly many other noted names could be found on the rolls of our Church.

Three missionaries have gone to the foreign mission field from our Church—these are Miss Mary Torrence, now Mrs. L. L. Moore, the late Miss Mildred Watkins, and Miss Maud Carson. Mr. Alan Craig, formerly a member, is a missionary to Africa, sent out by the First Church of Winston. Other than Dr. Walter Moore, this Church has had four

sons to enter the ministry. These are Revs. Edmund Brown, who died a few years ago, Morrison Brown, Walter Walsh and Clyde Walsh.

## The Spacious Church Yard

Our beautiful church yard, which is the admiration of all visitors to Charlotte, has served this people and community as a gathering place for many occasions, some of these stand out as marking notable historic events. According to the history of Gen. Joseph Graham, the first grand celebration of the 20th of May was held in 1835, in the "grove" of the Presbyterian Church. The account says "The enthusiasm of the immense multitude—5000 people, was beyond anything ever witnessed. The Revolutionary soldiers wore satin badges marked "75" instead of 76. Governor Swain was present and reviewed the procession. The stand in the grove was wreathed in flowers. General Wm. Polk led the military and Mr. Osborne (Judge James Osborne) read the Declaration. The oration was delivered by Franklin Smith, Esq., and a short speech by General Graham the guest of honor."

For many years after the war, indeed until very recently, the Memorial exercises on the 10th of May were held on the church grounds; the procession formed there and moved thence to the cemetery to decorate the graves.

The Ku Klux Klan of the seventies, an organization that saved the Anglo-Saxon race in the South, held its councils in the basement of the Church, where they were summoned by the signal—a weird whistle. As many of the adherents of the Klan were members of the Church, it is evident they met at this place with the sanction of the Session. The writer was personally told this fact by the late Major Brenizer, by the late Mr. W. E. Shaw, Mr. William Wilson and Mrs. Margaret Springs Kelly.

The funeral of Mrs. Stonewall Jackson was held in this Church. She was the only woman ever honored with a military funeral in North Carolina. The people overflowed the Church into the church yard and the streets were blocked on all four sides of the church square by the military companies and the funeral cortege.

Who of this audience will ever forget the dense crowd estimated at 12,000 that assembled in the church yard at the close of the Chapman-Alexander meeting, to bid an effectionate farewell to Dr. and Mrs. Chapman, Mr. and Mrs.

Alexander, Mr. Brown and Mr. Rock. None of us realized that it was to be a final farewell indeed, in the case of Doctor Chapman and Mr. Alexander, for the both passed into eternal rest shortly afterward.

The last great assemblage of the people on these grounds was on the occasion of the welcome to the 120th Regiment of the 30th Division—the Division that had broken the Hindenburg line, composed of North Carolinians and South Carolinians and Tennesseans. There was a great outpouring of people from all over this part of North and South Carolina. One of the Commanding Generals of the 30th Division was present as was the Colonel of the Regiment. Tables set in the yard were loaded with every kind of delectable food to satisfy the appetites of the returned soldiers. All will remember how the crowd had to scamper into the Church and Sunday School to get out of the deluge of rain, the soldier boys themselves ducking under the tables with their hands full.

During the recent great war the First Presbyterian Church turned over the auditorium of the Sunday School for a rest room to the soldiers at Camp Green in training or waiting to be sent to France. It was fitted up with rugs, couches, chairs and tables and supplied with writing materials, magazines and news papers. The grounds were opened to them and seats placed along the walks. It was a common sight to see them sitting in groups or lying on the green sward. Supper was furnished by the ladies of the Church every Saturday night as did many of the Charlotte Churches. They were also invited to dinner on Sunday so they need not return to camp and could have a full day of rest and recreation. One hundred and fourteen (114) young men and two young women in the Red Cross entered into their country's service from this Church and they are represented by one hundred and sixteen (116) stars on our beautiful service flag. Only one of this number, Mack DeArmon, was called to give up his young life. Many of us feel that Doctor Rolston none the less made the same sacrifice, having contracted a fatal disease while ministering to the spiritual needs of the officers and men at Camp Green.

*PART TWO*

# *The Woman's Auxiliary*
## *of the*
# *First Presbyterian Church*

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### It's Beginnings

That the women of today may be inspired by the deeds of those women who were pioneers in the spiritual, charitable and educational work of the First Presbyterian Church, these records are chronicled.

There is no data at hand concerning the formation of the first Woman's Society, but we have evidence that there was an active Society of women engaged in benevolent work in the early "fifties" of the past century. To confirm this statement there is this inscription on the fly leaf of the old Pulpit Bible—"Presented to the Presbyterian Church of Charlotte, by the Female Sewing Society, June 1853. Signed Margaret Shaw, Secretary."

Thus is shown conclusively the existence of a benevolent association of women who have left us a legacy of spirituality and grace to bid us God speed in the work of the Master. The names of the members of this first Society were —Mrs. D. A. Daughtery, Miss Sarah Daugherty, Miss Rita Gray, Miss Elva Grier, Miss Cornelia Johnston, Miss Ada Parks, Mrs. Margaret Shaw, Mrs. Harvey Wilson and Mrs. Harvey White.

The "Female Sewing Society" in 1869 became the "Aid and Orphanage Society with Mrs. S. M. Howell as President, when the Rev. Dr. A. W. Miller was pastor of the Presbyterian Church. The following ladies were included in the membership—Mesdames Zeb Vance, H. N. Reading, Sara Ross, A. H. Tate, Calvin Scott, John Gibbon, Harvey Wilson, Amanda Pritchard, J. W. Holland, J. L. Brown, A. W. Miller, M. E. Wriston, Archie Graham, Julia Smith, Sarah White, M. C. Tate and Miss Sophie Alexander.

### Beginnings of Barium Orphanage

The orphanage work of this band of consecrated women

grew into a real beneficence, for their society began the greatest work the North Carolina Synod is engaged in today, other than spreading the Gospel of Christ—the Barium Springs Orphanage. They started a little home for poor boys immediately after the "War of the 'sixties' " on 9th street near the railroad and it grew so large the Mecklenburg Presbytery took charge and finally became so important that the North Carolina Synod decided to adopt the Orphanage as its own. The children overflowed the building and it became necessary to secure larger quarters. The synod bought land at Barium Springs near Statesville and established the "Synodical Orphans Home", usually known as Barium Springs Orphanage.

Thus the little home in Charlotte, started by the women of the First Presbyterian Church, has grown until it houses and cares for 350 children. The women of the First Church have always felt a special interest in Barium and in 1912 were supporting seven orphans regularly, besides having a group called "Barium Springs Circle" who sewed and collected clothing for the children.

## First Foreign Missionary Society

In November 1875 the first Foreign Missionary Society was organized by the united efforts of the ladies of the First and Second Presbyterian Churches of Charlotte. Thirty women were enrolled with Mrs. Rufus Johnston of the Second Church as President and Mrs. Stonewall Jackson of the First Church as Secretary and Treasurer. In 1887 it was deemed best that each Church should have its own Missionary Society, therefore the Ladies of the First Church organized the "Ladies Foreign Missionary Society" with 67 members enrolled. The officers were Mrs. M. A. Osborne, President; Mrs. H. N. Reading 1st Vice-President; Mrs. C. M. Gibbon, 2nd Vice-President; Mrs. F. I. Osborne, Secretary; Mrs. S. J. White, Treasurer.

The young women of the Church in 1888 organized a society called the Randolph Missionary Society, named in honor of Miss Annie Randolph, the beloved Principal of a boarding School for girls in Hangchow, China. This Society contributed to both Home and Foreign missions. In 1902 the "Randolph" became a Home Missionary Society and transferred their foreign missionary efforts to the Ladies Foreign Missionary Society.

In 1895 the young girls following in the foot steps of their elders, organized "The Young Girls Missionary Society" which later became known as the "Mildred Watkins Society" in honor of a beloved woman of the Church, Miss Mildred Watkins, who afterward went to China as a Missionary and died there. A member of this Society, Miss Laura Pitts went to Korea as a trained nurse and "fell on sleep soon after reaching the foreign field. The Society sent funds to establish a cot in the Hospital as a memorial.

## History of Mecklenburg Presbyterial

In 1887, the women of the First and Second Presbyterian Churches of Charlotte, North Carolina, met in the First Church to make plans to organize societies in the Churches of Mecklenburg Presbytery, where there were none, and to stimulate and encourage societies already organized to extend the knowledge of God at home and abroad. This was the first step toward a Woman's Missionary Union in Mecklenburg Presbytery.

This meeting was so inspiring that in October, 1888, letters were written to all the churches in the Presbytery, inviting them to send delegates to the Woman's Missionary Meeting in the Second Church. This Meeting was well attended.

Mrs. C. M. Gibbon was called to the chair, and presided over the election. Mrs. Rufus Barringer was elected President, Miss Cordelia Phifer, Secretary. Many interesting papers were read and important subjects discussed, and plans were made to hold meetings every year. However, Presbytery did not approve of women's meetings and the plans were never carried out. No more attempts were made at organization for sixteen years.

In 1904, sixteen years afterwards, by the earnest and persistent efforts of Rev. George Atkinson, Presbytery was persuaded to approve and the women attempted another Missionary meeting. Letters were sent again to all the women and children's societies, urging them to send delegates to the First Church in order that a Woman's Home and Foreign Missionary Union might be organized.

Twenty-seven delegates representing sixteen churches responded, Mrs. John R. Irwin presided over the election. Mrs. W. H. Davis, wife of the pastor of Sharon Church, was elected President, Mrs. F. I. Osborne, Sec'y.

The next year, 1905, Mecklenburg Union met by invitation of the pastor Rev. George Atkinson, at the Monroe Church, and since then has met annually with the different churches of the Presbytery.

## Officers

| Year | Place of Meeting | Presiding Officer | Secretary | Treasurer |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1904 | First Church, Char. | Mrs. W. H. Davis | Mrs. Frank Osborne | Mrs. Irwin |
| 1905 | Monroe | Mrs. W. H. Davis | | |
| 1906 | Wadesboro | Mrs. John R. Irwin | | |
| 1907 | Albemarle | Miss Cornelia Shaw | | |
| 1908 | Matthews | Mrs. John R. Irwin | | |
| 1909 | Second Church | Mrs. John R. Irwin | | |
| 1910 | Sugar Creek | Mrs. R. A. Dunn | | |
| 1911 | Monroe | Mrs. R. A. Dunn | | |
| 1912 | Wadesboro | Mrs. John Irwin, Vice-President | | |
| 1913 | Steele Creek | Mrs. John Irwin, President | | |
| 1914 | Huntersville | Mrs. F. S. Neal | | |
| 1915 | First Church | Mrs. F. S. Neal | | |
| 1916 | Pineville | Miss Madeline Orr | | |
| 1917 | Albemarle | Miss Madeline Orr | | |
| 1918 | Second Church | Miss Macie McGinn | | |
| 1919 | Hopewell | Mrs. R. N. Page | | |
| 1921 | Monroe | Mrs. R. N. Page | | |
| 1922 | Wadesboro | Mrs. J. G. Baird | | |
| 1923 | Philadelphia | Mrs. J. G. Baird | | |
| 1924 | Caldwell Memorial | Mrs. J. B. Spillman | | |
| 1925 | Williams Memorial | Mrs. J. B. Spillman | | |
| 1926 | Norwood | Mrs. A. A. Walker, 4 years | | |
| 1931 | Monroe | Mrs. C. B. Long | | |
| 1932 | Sugar Creek | Mrs. A. A. Walker | | |
| 1933 | Albemarle | Mrs. Louise Clanton | | |

## The Board of Missions

In 1908 the women of the Church decided that they should be united in one compact body and unanimously formed the the "Woman's Board of United Missions of the First Presbyterian Church." Even the "Miriams" and the "Margaret Wilson" became branches of the Board of Missions. The organization had a printed "Constitution and By-Laws" which continued in force until the close of Mrs. J. E. Carson's term as President in 1914. Mrs. Carson and her executive committee invited Mrs. Archibald Davis of Atlanta to come to Charlotte and present the Auxiliary system, which had been adopted by the General Assembly in 1912, in answer to overtures from Women's Presbyterial and Synodical Unions asking the Assembly to authorize an assembly-wide Women's Auxiliary. This was the first time the Assembly had recognized a Church-wide Women's organization.

## The Auxiliary

Mrs. Davis came and presented the auxiliary plan of division into circles, which was adopted by the Board, after due consideration.

Mrs. F. C. Abbott was elected the first President for a term of two years from 1914-1916.

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|---|---|
| Mrs. Robert Glasgow | 1916-1917 |
| Mrs. Robert Gibbon (two terms) | 1917-1921 |
| Miss Annie Wilson | 1921-1923 |
| Mrs. Parks Kirkpatrick | 1923-1925 |
| Mrs. J. F. Flowers | 1925-1927 |
| Mrs. E. M. Cole | 1927-1928 |
| Mrs. Horace Johnston | 1928-1929 |
| Mrs. P. H. Harrelson | 1929-1930 |
| Mrs. Wm. Wilcox | 1930-1931 |
| Mrs. McAlister Carson | 1931-1933 |

Besides contributing liberally toward all the Home and Foreign Mission Causes of the Synod and General Assembly the First Church Auxiliary has made special donations that have been and are of real benefit to the youth of the Church. The local work of the Alexander Rescue Home and gifts to the Presbyterian Hospital are outstanding beneficences that are a part of the regular budget, besides contributions through the Hospital Auxiliary and personal gifts to the Home.

A living room in the Lottie Walker building at Barium Springs Orphanage was beautifully furnished by the Auxiliary in memory of two beloved members—Mrs. L. W. Sanders and Mrs. W. W. Ward. A handsome piano and book case completed the furnishing. Books are constantly being replaced and added. This building is a dormitory for the senior girls and the living room is fitted up for their comfort and pleasure.

During Miss Annie Wilson's term as President a Scholarship was given to the "Student Loan Fund" of the General Assembly by the Auxiliary, as a Gold Star memorial to Mack DeArmon, the only soldier answering his country's call from the First Church, who gave up his life.

A list of Scholarships donated by the Auxiliary to the "Student Loan Fund" has been furnished by Dr. Sweets, Secretary of Christian Education:—

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. The C. Mack DeArmon Gold Star Scholarship Received March 29, 1923 | $432.50 |
| 2. The Sallie Summey Orr Scholarship March 27th, 1926 | 600.00 |
| 3. The Sarah Tiddy Scholarship Feb. 2, 1926 | 600.00 |
| 4. The Dr. and Mrs. D. F. Summey Scholarship | 250.00 |
| 5. The Ella Summey Scholarship | 600.00 |
| Total | $2,482.50 |

The Auxiliary also helped equip Mission Court, the home in Richmond, Va., for missionaries who return home on vacation, and presented to the establishment a handsome victrola marked with a bronzed plate saying it was presented as a memorial to Dr. David Rolston.

All the Departments of Women's Work in the First Church have labored together harmoniously under the Auxiliary system and if all the early records were available, the showing of the financial contributions of these women would be unbelievable. As it is they have contributed since the Auxiliary was formed in 1914, with records for two years missing, the splendid sum of $167,000.00. This aggregate does not include women's gifts to the Church through the Duplex envelopes.

Due to the loss of many members to the new Myers Park Church and to the financial stringency of the times, the individual sacrifices of these last two years make the gifts loom larger, in that many have denied themselves necessities to make their pledges.

## Names of Officers of the Auxiliary 1931-33

President ..... Mrs. McAlister Carson
Vice-President ..... Mrs. Parks Kirpatrick
Secretary ..... Mrs. Claude Sloan
Treasurer ..... Mrs. Banks McClintock
Historian ..... Mrs. J. A. Fore

## The Rescue Home

Even though the Synod had taken over the Orphanage work begun by the women of the First Presbyterian Church, there was still need for local rescue effort for very poor and nameless children. Mrs. L. W. Sanders has written a short history of the Rescue Home from which I quote —"When the managers after the first year of their effort in 1895 decided to have an "Anniversary Day" the Charlotte Observer of July 7, 1895, gave the following account of the success of the launching of this new charity: "The Home was organized several years ago as a Home for aged women; several orphan children drifted into it, and the women were impressed with the necessity of establishing an orphanage. The work grew and more children were brought in, and the ladies saw they must enlarge their borders. The work from the outset has been sustained by two Ladies Societies, one in each of our First and Second Presbyterian Churches.

Seeing their struggle, Mr. R. B. Alexander, a christian gentleman, came forward and not only gave a site, but donated the substantial building in 1894 which is situated on the corner of McDowell and Third Streets."

Mrs. John Gibbon in her address as President of the Society, spoke to a large audience of interested citizens in an appreciative way of Mr. Alexander's generosity in enabling the Society to round up the year's work free of debt. Further, she said with deep feeling, The friends of the Rescue, as they see children doomed from their birth to lives of shame seem to hear the voice of our King saying—"Take these children and nurse them for me, and I will pay thee thy wages."

All the Presbyterian Churches of Charlotte contribute to the upkeep of the Home, which has grown immensely and now accommodates 48 children in the new building located at 1252 East Boulevard on the site donated by the late Mr. E. D. Latta.

*PART THREE*

# *The Centennial*
## *of the*
# *First Presbyterian Church*
## 1832 - 1932

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Although the Charlotte members of Sugar Creek Presbyterian Church were organized into a congregation in 1821 as a part of Concord Presbytery, the Presbyterians did not own the building until August, 1832. In that year the trustees obtained a deed to the property from the Commissioners of Charlotte and it became a distinctly Presbyterian Church.

As the year 1932 opened up the one hundredth anniversary of that event loomed in the late summer. At the January meeting of the Auxiliary, the Historian gave a resume of the history of the church, announced the approach of the Centennial, and suggested that steps be taken toward a celebration and further historical research into the annals of the Church, Sunday School, and Societies.

Mrs. McAlister Carson, the President, appointed a committee to consider the matter of the celebration in co-operation with the officers of the Church, and also to secure and collect all available history and relics.

On account of the stringency of the times the committee realized that missions and beneficencies of the Church already curtailed, must not be further crippled, and that very little could be spent for the celebration.

This Committee sent an overture to the Session and Board of Deacons asking, first, their joint interest in inaugurating plans for a Centennial observance; second, to have all vital records of the early beginnings copied in a journal book so that the original Minute Books can be preserved; and third, that a condensed history be written of the periods from 1805 to 1832—1832 to 1865—and 1865 to 1932.

The Session appointed a committee to arrange a formal but simple program for the occasion and to assist in research work for a correct history.

The Auxiliary Committee worked strenuously all summer searching records, collecting data and Church relics. The Committee was composed of Miss Madeline Orr and Mrs. W. M. Wilcox for the Sunday School and Young People's work and Mrs. J. A. Fore for the History and Evolution of the Auxiliary and also to add to the Church History she had already written. Mrs. J. A. Fore was Chairman.

## Official Records

Records established the fact that services were held by Presbyterians in the early settlement of the town of Charlotte, long before it received its name.

It is related in the history of Poplar Tent Church that "Dr. Thompson, pastor of Center Church, who died in 1753, preached to the scattered Presbyterians in North Carolina. At Charlotte he preached in the grove by the Presbyterian Blacksmith Shop."

Tompkins History of Mecklenburg County, on page 107 states, "Rev. S. C. Caldwell had been preaching in Charlotte once a month since 1805 and continued till his death in 1826."

Records of Concord Presbytery—"In 1807, Rev. S. C. Caldwell gave one fourth his time to Charlottetown."

Also, "the Presbytery of Concord met at Charlotte, N. C., April 2nd, 1811 (Page 306)."

Records of Sugar Creek Presbyterian Church—"In 1821 the Charlotte members of Sugar Creek Church petitioned to be formed into a separate congregation."

Records Concord Presbytery, September 5th, 1921—Supplication of a number of subscribers living in the village of Charlotte to be formed into the Charlotte congregation.

Also, April 6th, 1824—Presbytery met at Charlotte.

Charlotte Church was reported to General Assembly in 1825 '26-'27. (G. A. Minutes.)

Rev. R. H. Morrison received a joint call April 1827, from the Sugar Creek Church and the Presbyterian Church of Charlotte, then a pastorate of 36 members. The Sugar Creek Church tendered $400.00 per annum for two-thirds of the minister's services, and the Charlotte congregation offered $200.00 for the other third, the intention being "that you may be free from worldly cares and avocations."—From

Dr. Morrison's records in possession of his grandson, Capt. R. H. Morrison.

Record, Concord Presbytery—1829—Charlotte Church—Rev. R. H. Morrison pastor (with Sugar Creek) 3 added to Church and 7 infants baptised. (General Assembly Minutes).

These records show conclusively that the Charlotte Church was organized in 1821. In fact, Tompkin's History states on page 162, "The First Presbyterian Church has occupied its present site since 1821." Many Churches are organized and hold regular services long before they own a church building. Thus, the real Centennial was 1921, although the Church decided to use the date 1832 when the Church property was bought. The Methodists and a small group of Baptists also used the building for their worship up to 1832, when they could secure the services of a preacher, as the building was for the benefit of all denominations up to that time.

Research into the history of the Church disclosed many interesting events, incidents and personages of the past—many splendid gifts to the Church and large donations by the members to the various causes and institutions of the Southern Presbyterian Assembly.

Gen. D. H. Hill, an Elder in the Church, started the first Mission Sunday School in Charlotte. It was in a neighborhood called "California" on Mint and Hill Streets the latter street named for General Hill. Many of the church members taught in this Sunday School. Seeing the great need of these poor white children, growing up in ignorance—there were no free schools in that day—the Church established a day school in the same building as the Sunday School, and selected Mrs. Martha Moore as the teacher, her salary paid entirely by members of the Church. Mrs. Moore was a widow and the mother of Dr. Walter Moore, afterward the distinguished President of Union Seminary, and Mr. C. C. Moore a prominent citizen of Charlotte, both of whom passed away recently, and Miss Ida Moore of this city. Miss Moore says the School was located on the site of the "Good Samaritan Hospital."

It was learned that Dr. Scarr, who at his death had served as Superintendent of the Sunday School for thirty years, conducted a Sunday School for negro children in the basement of the Church many years after the

War. As many as fifty negro children were regular attendants. The teachers used the Blue Back Speller to assist the children in deciphering the Bible Lessons and Sunday School papers. Mr. C. C. Moore, Captain Brenizer, Mr. Geo. B. Hanna, Mrs. Samuel Howell, Mrs. Anna McCombs, Mrs. Mary Andrews Craven, and others taught in this negro Sunday School. This was real missionary work.

## Gifts and Memorials

It will be of interest to the present and future generations to make note of some of the outstanding gifts. When the building was completed in 1823 there remained a debt of $1500.00 which was assumed by the Commissioners of the town, they retaining the title to the property. The charter of the bank from which the money was borrowed expired in 1832, and the payment became necessary. Mr. John Irwin proposed to the authorities if they would convey the property to him he would personally pay off the debt of $1500.00, which was considered a great burden on the town. A deed was accordingly made to him, and he in turn deeded the property to the Trustees of the Presbyterian congregation. The members subsequently reimbursed Mr. Irwin the sum of $640.00, he paying the remainder.

The first pipe organ in this part of the State was purchased by six members and presented to the Church. The organ was paid for with Confederate money.

Mr. William Carson left bequests of $1000.00 to the Church and $5,000.00 and his Library to Davidson College in 1846.

Mr. Samuel Alexander in his Will (dated 1900) bequeathed $5,000.00 each to Davidson College, Barium Springs, Foreign Missions and for the training of young men to enter the ministry—$20,000.00 in all.

The office building at Barium Springs Orphanage was built by Mr. J. C. Burroughs, an elder in this Church, who also left a legacy of $60,000.00 to the Endowment fund of the Orphanage.

The Laundry was built by Mr. C. W. Johnston, an officer in this Church, at an expense of about $20,000.00. Mr Johnston also contributed $10,000.00 to the building of the Jenny Gilmer Cottage.

Many others of this generation have contributed largely to the Causes and Institutions of the Assembly.

Mr. John Carson and Mrs. Geo B. Hanna and Miss Sarah Tiddy have made bequests in recent years, to the Church.

Besides donations of money there have been other splendid gifts.

There is recorded in the files of the Woman's Board a gift of a pulpit Bible in the early 'fifties'. Search revealed the Bible on the Pulpit was that old Bible nearly 80 years old. On the fly-leaf is penned these quaint lines: "Presented to the Presbyterian Pulpit by the Female Sewing Society, June 1852. Signed, Margaret Shaw, Secretary."

Inspection of the beautiful old silver Communion Service (in use before the modern individual cups) consisting of a pitcher, three goblets, three plates and also the silver baptismal bowl, showed that they were the gift of Mr. Patrick J. Lowrie before the War Between the States. Patrick J. Lowrie was a Captain in the Confederate Army and laid down his life for his comrades by nursing them through Yellow Fever at Fort Fisher in 1862. He was a grandson of Judge Samuel Lowrie of the State Supreme Court and a descendent of Patrick Jack, the father of Captain James Jack who carried the Mecklenburg Declaration to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, May, 1775. This same gentleman cared for our beautiful trees in those early days, pruning and enriching them, thereby insuring their beauty and long life. These facts were given the writer by his son, H. W. Lowrie, a prominent lawyer in Denver, Col. He knew from his mother of the gift of the Communion Service by his father.

Another precious gift to this Church is the exquisite marble baptismal font given by the children of the Church as a testimonial of their love for the venerable Dr. A. W. Miller.

Mrs. W. H. Porcher gave the very handsome silver collection plates November 1920, in memory of her mother, Mrs. E. D. Latta, a life-long member of this church.

The most splendid gift, however, was that of Mr. J. C. Burroughs who donated in 1916, $20,000.00 which made possible the Sunday School addition, completing the Church as it is today. Mr. Burroughs lived to see the result of his liberality.

Other interesting gifts are the beautiful Memorial windows—one of these representing the "Vision of St. John" was a tribute to the memory of Dr. John A Preston, by the

travelling men from all over the South, who felt his loss keenly.

The other five windows in the main Auditorium were presented in memory of their loved ones who had passed on, by Mr. W. W. Overman, Mrs. Rufus McAden, Mr. John Morehead, Mr. George Wilson, and Mr. R. M. Miller.

The window on the stairway of the Sunday School was placed by the congregation, a token of love and esteem for Mr. J. C. Burroughs who gave so liberally to the building fund of the Sunday School.

Other memorials by the congregation are three tablets on the walls of the main auditorium in honor of three beloved pastors who died in the service of this Church—Dr. A. W. Miller, Dr. Morris Kincaid, and Dr. David Rolston.

Soon after the World War, at the request of the Auxiliary, two oak trees were planted in the Church yard by the Session in memory of the young soldier, Mack DeArmon and the beloved minister, Dr. David Rolston. These young oaks are thriving, thanks to the intelligent care given them, as well as the entire church property by our splendid manager and church officer, Mr. Will Ward.

Mrs. Bessie Dewey was the organist for many years, even after the organ was removed from the gallery to its place back of the pulpit and until the present instrument was installed in 1900. She was greatly esteemed by the entire membership and at the close of her term as organist she was presented with a beautiful silver service as a testimonial of their love and appreciation.

## Relics Discovered

The original bell of this Church hangs today in the tower of the First Ward School of this city on the corner of Ninth and Brevard Sts.

The old Pulpit Bible used today was presented in June 1853, nearly 80 years ago.

A beautiful little melodeon with bellows run by hand was found in the room below the Belfry. It was used long before the War between the States, and is a real curosity to this generation. After the first pipe organ was purchased, the melodeon was still used for Sunday School which was held in the Church in those days. It stood on the floor to the left of the Pulpit, and I am told that Mrs. Dewey was the last organist to play it for the children to sing.

The old silver Communion service and baptismal bowl.

Several engraved Pew deeds, dated 1857.

Photostatic copy of deed from Commission of Charlotte to Mr. John Irwin of the Church property.

Photostatic copy of deed from Mr. John Irwin to Trustees of Church.

Old newspaper containing account of General Assembly held in First Church in 1897 memorable because it was the 250th anniversary of the Westminster Assembly.

Painting of rear view of Church before addition of Sunday School in 1916. Painting by Mr. M. E. Boyer, Jr.

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The organization in 1832 had taken place on the last Sunday in August, but many of the congregation were still away on their vacation in August 1932, and matters had to be arranged and adjusted after their return.

The Session decided that the Celebration of the Church Centenary should be observed at a series of four services on Wednesday evening the 16th; Friday evening the 18th; and two services on Sunday the 20th of November, 1932.

## CENTENNIAL PROGRAM

### Wednesday Night—Church Night

Dr. Albert Sidney Johnson presided.

The program included:

Greeting from the Presbyterian Churches in Charlotte—Dr. Chas. R. Nisbet—Pastor of Caldwell Memorial Church.

An address on the History of the Church—Dr. R. A. Dunn—an Elder and former Moderator of the General Assembly.

A list of Elders and Deacons from 1857 to the present time—Read by Dr. Johnson, the pastor.

### Friday Night—Societies Night

Rev. Walter Walsh, Pastor at Stone Gap, Va., and former member of the Church presided.

Prayer and Singing of a Hymn.

History of Young People's Societies—Mrs. Elizabeth Chambers Holt. Read by Mr. Tom Graham.

Men's Society—Mr. Philip Howerton, son of former pastor.

Consider the Lilies—Sung by Mrs. J. Nick Sloan.

Historic Incidents and Events—Mrs. J. A. Fore, Historian of Auxiliary.

History of Auxiliary—Mrs. T. B. Whitted.

Into the Garden My Master Went—Sung by Mr. C. W. Upchurch.

Hymn and Benediction.

The aforesaid valuable relics were on display.

## Sunday Morning

Dr. Johnson presided.

Dr. Edward Mack, Professor at Union Theologicol Seminary at Richmond, and a former pastor of this Church, preached the Centennial sermon. His text was, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Psalms 11-3.

## Sunday Afternoon

Rev. Clyde Walsh, a son of the church, presided.

History of the Sunday School for the first 80 years—Miss Madeline Orr.

History of the Last 30 years—Mrs. W. M. Wilcox.

This program concluded the observance of the Centennial Services.

## OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH—1932

Rev. Albert Sidney Johnson, D. D., Pastor

### THE SESSION

George M. Rose, Clerk

F. H. Andrews
M. E. Boyer
W. B. Bradford
E.T.Cansler
W. M. Wilcox
McAlister Carson
R. A. Dunn
F. O. Hawley
Morgan B. Speir
J. W. McClung
Dr. J. P. Munroe
Jesse M. Oldham
H. H. Orr
Thos. J. Smith

### The Diaconate

Thos. R. Stewart, Chairman

C. M. Carson
J. A. Fore
Dr. R. L. Gibbon
C. W. Johnston
Jno. M. Scott
W. B. McClintock
A. S. Orr
H. B. Patterson
Ivey W. Stewart
W. N. Ward, Treasurer
A. T. Summey
Dolph M. Young
J. W. Zimmerman

### The Sabbath School

W. B. Bradford ..... Superintendent
R. E. Walsh ..... Treasurer

### Auxiliary

Mrs. McAlister Carson ..... President

### Men's Foreign Mission Society

Harvey W. Orr ..... President

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Thanks are due for assistance in securing information, to Mrs. S. O. Brooks, Miss Madeline Orr, Mrs. J. B. Spillman, Montreat Historical Foundation, Mrs. R. L. Gibbon, Mr. Frank Andrews, Mr. Will Ward, Mrs. Parks Kirkpatrick.

—Mrs. J. A. Fore

## *Holds Block Given to Church Here is Unique*

(Communication to Charlotte Observer)

Charlotte, with more churches and a larger percentage of church-going population than any city in the World except Edinburgh, Scotland, is also unique in being the second City in the world in preserving a whole City block in the heart of the business district for church purposes, according to Dr. W. Y. Quisenberry, of Richmond, Va., representing the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

After visiting most of the cities of the United States, many in South America, and Europe, and even many in Asia and Africa, Dr. Quisenberry said he has not seen many sights more beautiful than the square here occupied by the First Presbyterian Church, with its majestic trees. He is sure Charlotte is alone in all the cities of America in retaining one city block in an area where real estate is most valuable as a church site * * * * * *

He said—"I recently have been round the world on a mission tour of inspection and have visited many cities in this country, in Europe, in parts of Asia and Africa and I have not found anything more impressive than the sight of your magnificent city square with its majestic trees and green grass surrounding a church building of striking architectural design. One city block in this commercial age reserved for God! My, how unusual and how beautiful. I shall use the fact in my addresses hereafter. Surely, the people of this city do not appreciate the singular circumstance or else are not aware of its beauty and its interest to strangers."

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